Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 13294 201532Z
ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 13294

USEEC ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, GW, MT
SUBJECT: EUROPEAN DIALOGUE ON ASSISTANCE TO MALTA

REFERENCE: STATE 179390

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE FRG DOES NOT PLAN TO MEET MINTOFF'S JULY 31 DEADLINE THOUGH IT SEEMS INCLINED EVENTUALLY TO MAKE SOME CONTRIBUTION TOWARD THE $30 MILLION HE IS SEEKING. IN THE MEANTIME, THE FRG WILL CONTINUE ITS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO MALTA AT THE RATE OF DM 30 MILLION OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBOFF CALLED ON FOREIGN OFFICE ACTING DESK OFFICER FOR MALTA BLANKENSTEIN (MORE SENIOR OFFICIALS ARE ON SUMMER LEAVE) ON JULY 19 AND PRESENTED SUBSTANCE OF REFTEL. BLANKENSTEIN REPLIED THAT A SERIES OF COORDINATED ACTIONS BETWEEN THE FRG, FRANCE AND ITALY WAS, IN FACT, UNDERWAY. HE ACKNOWLEDGED, HOWEVER, THAT
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 BONN 13294 201532Z

THERE WAS NO PROSPECT OF MEETING MINTOFF'S JULY 31 DEADLINE NOR WAS IT CERTAIN THAT THE EFFORT (DESCRIBED BELOW) WOULD RESULT IN THE $30 MILLION MINTOFF IS SEEKING.

2. BLANKENSTEIN SAID CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT WOULD REPLY TO MINTOFF'S LETTER NEXT WEEK. HE WILL TELL MINTOFF THAT

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

THE FRENCH AND ITALIANS MUST TAKE THE LEAD IN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO MALTA. THE FRG, HOWEVER, IS READY TO PARTICIPATE IN SUCH AN EFFORT AND WILL CONTACT VARIOUS WESTERN COUNTRIES TO THIS END.

3. BLANKENSTEIN SAID THE FRG WILL APPROACH THE US, UK, SPAIN, FRANCE, ITALY, BELGIUM AND THE NETHERLANDS WITH REGARD TO PARTICIPATING IN ECONOMIC AID TO MALTA. THE GERMAN APPROACH WILL BE CLOSELY FOLLOWED BY AN ITALIAN INVITATION TO AN EXPERTS MEETING IN ROME. IT IS ENVISAGED THAT THE MEETING, WHICH WILL ADDRESS MALTA'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL FUTURE, INCLUDING MINTOFF'S REQUEST FOR $30 MILLION, WOULD BE HELD IN SEPTEMBER. BLANKENSTEIN STRESSED THAT THE FRG CONTEMPLATED A SERIES OF BILATERAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND WAS OPPOSED TO A CONSORTIUM.

4. SPEAKING PERSONALLY, BLANKENSTEIN SAW LITTLE POSSIBILITY THAT PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONFERENCE (OTHER THAN FRANCE AND ITALY) WOULD BE PREPARED TO ASSIST MALTA. MOREOVER, HE THOUGHT IT UNLIKELY THAT THE FRG WOULD AGREE TO A SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TOWARD THE $30 MILLION FIGURE, NOTING THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAD BEEN HARD PRESSED TO OBTAIN DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY CONCURRENCE FOR CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO MALTA.
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5. IN THEIR MEETINGS WITH MALTESE FOREIGN SECRETARY ABELA, WISCHNEWSKI AND VAN WELL WILL OUTLINE THE ABOVE SCENARIO AND ADD THAT THE FRG HAS, IN THE MEANTIME, DECIDED TO CONTINUE PROVIDING DEVELOPMENT AID TO MALTA. THE AID, WHICH IS NON-BUDGETARY AND PROJECT-TIED, WILL BE FOR DM 30 MILLION OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. THE GERMANS UNDERSTAND THE ITALIANS ARE SIMILARLY PLANNING TO CONTINUE DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO MALTA.

6. COMMENT: ADDRESSEES WILL RECOGNIZE THE GERMAN SCHEME FOR AN EXPERTS MEETING AS ONE FIRST CONSIDEREDBY BONN AFTER GENSCHER'S NOVEMBER 1977 VISIT TO MALTA. THE FACT THAT IT HAS REMAINED DORMANT SINCE THEN IS A GOOD INDICATOR OF BONN'S SENSE OF URGENCY REGARDING MINTOFF. WHILE THE GERMANS TELL US THEY ARE PREPARED TO ASSIST MALTA, THEY ARE UNWILLING TO MEET MINTOFF'S DEMANDS OR HIS TIMETABLE. THEY EXPECT HIM TO BE DISAPPOINTED. THEY ARE CONFIDENT, HOWEVER, THAT MALTA'S TIES TO THE WEST WILL MITIGATE AGAINST HIS PLAYING THE ARAB CARD.
STOESSEL

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

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Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

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Sheryl P. Walter
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EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
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